

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6067

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR EG LE SY XF

SUBJ: CAIRO PRESS REPORTS FALL OF TEL ZA'TAR, STRESSES SYRIAN
RESPONSIBILITY

1. ALL PAPERS AUGUST 13 GIVE SENSATIONAL TREATMENT TO FALL OF
TEL ZA'TAR, STRESSING "HORRIFYING CRIMES" OF RIGHTISTS AND
ULTIMATE SYRIAN RESPONSIBILITY. INTERNAL SITUATION IN SYRIA
PLAYED UP AS SHAKY.

2. TEL ZA'TAR. THRUST OF REPORTS IS THAT FALL OF CAMP ACHIEVES
ONE GOAL OF "HORRIBLE SYRIAN CONSPIRACY" AGAINST PALESTINIANS AND
LEBANESE NATIONALISTS. PALESTINIAN REACTION, WITH WHICH PRESS
AGREES, IS THAT SYRIAN "CHIEF PERPETRATORS OF THIS HORRIFYING
CRIME". PLO VOWS REVENGE. ATTACK ON CAMP REPORTEDLY
LED BY SYRIAN COLONEL EL MEDANI, "DISPATCHED BY ASAD".

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AHRAM REPORTS RIGHTIST MACHINE GUNNING OF YOUTH AND WOMEN,

BUT RIGHTIST GENERALLY TREATED BY PRESS AS TOOLS OF SYRIANS.

3. SYRIANS INTERNAL SITUATION. PAPERS SUGGEST SYRIAN INTERNAL SITUATIONIS PREREVOLUTIONARY WITH PROMINENT REPORTS OF DAMASCUS BOMBINGS. HEADLINES CLAIM "THIRTEEN BLASTS IN TWO WEEKS" ARE WORK OF ANTI-BA'ATHIST "SYRIAN REVOLUTIONARY ORIGANIZATION".

4. COMMENTARY DWELLS ON EVILS OF SYRIAN REGIME WITH NO MENTION OF RIGHTISTS. AHRAM SAYS SYRIA MUST BE SAVED FROM FALLING VICTIM TO "EXTERNAL DESIGN" THAT SEEKS NEGATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OCTOBER WAR. AKHBAR ECHOED CONTENTIONS IN EGYPTIAN LETTER TO ARAB LEAGUE (CAIRO 10844) THAT SUDAN COUP ATTEMPT AND LEBANESE MASACRES ARE PART OF SAME CONSPIRACY SEEKING ABORT RESULTS OF OCTOBER WAR AND GAINS OF PALESTINIAN CAUSE. "SYRIAN BA'ATHIST REGIME PLAYS MAIN ROLE IN THIS CONSPIRACY" AND PAPER ASKS IF IT WILL EVER BOW TO WILL OF LEBANESE AND ARAB MAJORITY. CLAIMS ANSWER LIES IN HANDS OF SYRIAN PEOPLE, "WHO CAPABLE OF PUNISHING SYRIAN REGIME" FOR MASSACRE OF LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN PEOPLES. GUMHURRIYA STRESSED THAT SADAT HAS NO PLANS FOR MEETING WITH ASAD BECAUSE "HANDS OF SYRIAN BA'ATHISTS STAINED WITH PALESTINIAN BLOOD" AND SYRIAN POLICY PROVEN PERFIDIOUS. "EGYPT DOES NOT EXTEND HER HAND TO THOSE WHO STAND IN SAME TRENCH WITH ISRAEL."

5. COMMENT: PRESS THUS CONTINUES TO SUSTAIN FEVERISH PITCH OF ANTI-SYRIAN PROPAGANDA. NEW AND SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IS THAT CLEAR DISTINCTION FORMERLY DRAWN BETWEEN ASAD AND SYRIAN BA'ATH IS FADING NOTICEABLY AND VARIOUS PRESS COMMENTS NOW SEEM TO EQUATE THE TWO. THIS REFLECTS EGYPTIAN BELIEF THAT BA'ATHISTS, RATHER THAN ASAD, ARE NOW CONTROLLING SYRIAN POLICY. CLEARLY NEWS TREATMENT AND COMMENTARY ARE HINTING OPENLY THAT SYRIAN LEADERSHIP MUST GO. TASK OF SAUDI AND KUWAITI MEDIATORS DISCRETELY URGING EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN RECONCILIATION HAS BEEN MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY THIS ATTITUDINAL CHANGE AND

THE NEW BATTLE OF RHETORICAL INVECTIVE WHICH EGYPT AND SYRIA ARE AGAIN WAGING. WE STILL DO NOT ENTIRELY EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF SOME SORT OF A SADAT/ASAD MEETING AT COLOMBO, IF FRIENDS OF BOTH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESS HARD ENOUGH, BUT ANY SUCH MEETING IS LIKELY TO BE DECIDEDLY FROSTY.,
EILTS

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